

NEWS

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Shush! This Is Your Local CIA Office

CPYRGHT

By Robert Gruenberg

The Central Intelligence Agency — that "invisible government" — isn't so invisible.

Well, at least not on the surface.

In Chicago, a big, fat friendly man who works for the CIA will tell you they're just friendly folk who go around talking to people just back from abroad, and asking, "What's new?"

Tap telephones? Overthrow Castro? Poison the crops? Eavesdrop on foreign diplomats?

"Not us," says Bill McCarthy who works for the local branch of the spy agency. His job is secret, and his age is "classified."

CONTRARY to what you might believe, the CIA isn't hard to find.

They're in the telephone book, page 1590, wedged between "Census Bur" and "Civil Rights — U.S. Comm on."

They're rather reticent about it, so they're in light type, not heavy bold capital letters like the DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, or even the INTERAGENCY BOARD OF U.S. CIVIL SERV EXAMINERS.

If you telephone 922-1814, or 922-1191, a sweet young voice will answer, "922-1814," or "922-1191."

"Hello, CIA?"

"Can I help you?"

"Where are you located?"

"I'm sorry, I'm not allowed to tell you."

"This is The Daily News. We'd like to come over and visit."

"YOU CAN'T. Is there any particular reason you want to?"

"What does the CIA do in Chicago?"

"I can't . . . one moment. I'll connect you with someone who probably can give you a plausible reason."

Silence. More silence.

"Hello, this is Mr. McCarthy."

"Hello, Mr. McCarthy. This is The Daily News. What do you do in Chicago?"

"We try to avoid as much publicity as possible."

"Why?"

"To avoid crank calls from people who think they have the solutions to all the world's troubles."

ONE HOUR LATER a reporter - photographer team stepped off the elevator in the antiseptic corridors of the Federal Building on the 26th floor, headed for Room 2660.

The corridor wall directory doesn't say CIA, or anything like that. It says "M. Simpson" with an arrow underneath.

Walk around the corner, past the "Electrical Wire Closet," past "Men," past "Women," past two more closets, turn another corner, and there's 2660.

A lonely door . . . at the end of the corridor. You can't just walk in. Press the buzzer at the side.

A pretty girl opens the door, and McCarthy holds out his hand in greeting.

McCarthy isn't long in warming to his topic, and the place isn't "bugged," he says. "Go ahead — look for yourself," he adds.

"We try to operate as quietly as we can," he repeats. "We collect information as to what's going on outside the continental limits of the United States."

IT'S EASY to do in Chicago. There is lots of international business carried on here. Chicago has the largest foreign-born and second-generation population of any city in the world, government authorities say. Chicagoans travel abroad, write to kin abroad.

The CIA collects that information from people willing to talk about their experiences and passes it on to Washington.

"They are good, loyal patriotic citizens, interested in helping their country," says McCarthy.

WHAT kind of information? All kinds. What was the political situation in the country they visited? How did the people act? Were there any guns around?

Maybe someone saw a new machine tool being manufactured. What was it? Could it, for instance, affect agricultural development? Fertilizer output?

Sometimes, the CIA doesn't even have to ask. People call up, and say, "I've been to so-and-so and thought you'd be interested in . . ."

"AREN'T YOU GUYS in the James Bond business?"

"Those are 'defective' stories," McCarthy said.

"We have absolutely nothing to do with that sort of thing. When I walk in to see someone, I positively identify myself, and make absolutely sure he knows and understands who I am."

"No telephone tapping, even? No steaming open letters?"

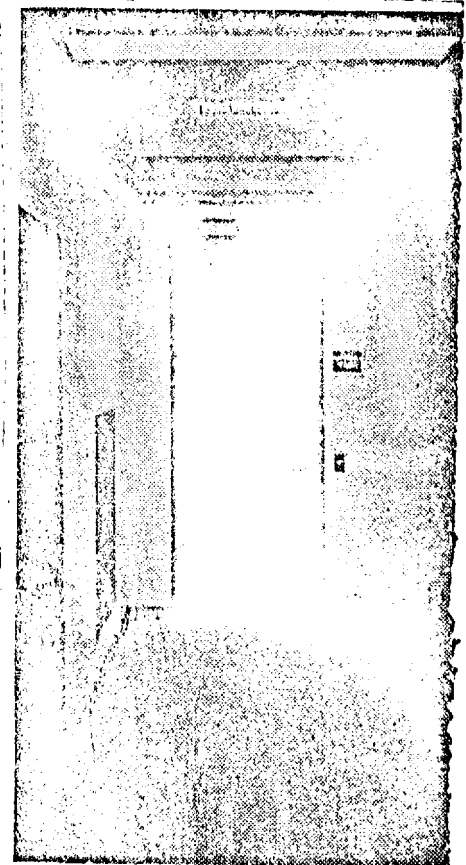
"That is not done in Chi-

cago," replied the even-humored McCarthy. "That's the hardest thing to convince people."

As the reporter-photographer team left, three lights were seen flashing on the ceiling near a row of cubicle-like offices.

"What are those for?" McCarthy was asked.

"Oh," he said, "that's to tell people here we've got visitors in the office."



That unmarked CIA door . . .